Names and Christian Identity

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In response to your friendly request, I will gladly specify historically and ecclesiologically the content of the characteristics attributed to Western Christianity: Catholic - Roman Catholic - Western - Latin and Papal. The names used by a place for its self-identification or those attributed to it are of great importance in History because they are related to the attempt to define its identity.

1. Catholic Church, Catholic Christians, Catholic Faith: Christians were originally called "disciples" (of Jesus Christ). "To make disciples" means: I make someone a member of the body of Christ, the Church (cf. Matt. 10:19). The name "Christians" was given to the believers in Christ later (see Acts 10:26) and indeed in an ethnic environment (Antioch). From the end of the 1st century to the beginning of the 2nd, the name "Catholic Church" appears (the term in the letters of Saint Ignatius †107). The term "catholic" (of Aristotelian origin) means all the Truth in Christ, given that heresies dismember the Faith, accepting a part of it, and eventually pervert (destroy) it. However, when the great heresies appeared, such as Arianism, which also used the adjective "Catholic" for themselves, the authentic (Holy Patristic) Church also added the adjective "orthodox" to distinguish it from heresies. (It should be said that St. Justin Popovich calls "Papism" "Neo-Arianism"). Important testimony: In the 5th century, the well-known Christian writer and historian Theodoret Cyrus had the great phrase: "of the Catholic Church **of the Orthodox** in Constantinople" (*Compendium of Heretical Accounts* 4,12): **Catholic-Orthodox** (which is historically more correct), the **Orthodox Catholic** Church. Only the Church of the Apostolic-Patristic tradition can be called **Catholic** and **Orthodox.**

2. The Roman Catholic Church: We have already talked about the second one. Only the Orthodox (Apostolic-Patristic) Church is also a Catholic Church. The Roman/Romaic is not only associated with Old Rome, which was also a creation of the Greeks (daughter of Odysseus, Rome = wealth, power, strength), but since 330 (inauguration of the new Capital, May 11th), ancient Byzantium is the New Rome. This is her true name. "Constantinople," in honour of Constantine the Great, was given later and is not, as a consequence, her first name. For this reason, the Citizens of the Capital of the Roman State are called **Romans/Romaioi (Ρωμαῖοι)**, and in the simplest form, **Romans/Romeoi (Ρωμηοί)**, which means citizens of New Rome. (Kapodistrias, according to Nikolaos Spiliadis, wanted to create a **Neo-Roman Empire,** namely, to resurrect the Empire of New Rome). The name Byzantium for the State has been used since 1562 by the Franko-Teuton Hieronymus Wolff. A (New) Roman is an Orthodox citizen of New Rome.

That is why Roman/Romeos (Ρωμηός) means Orthodox (neither a Mason nor a Marxist, etc.). Only the Orthodox are called Romans/Romeos (Ρωμηοί). That is why the words Roman/Romaios **(ρωμαῖος)** or Roman/Romanos **(ρωμάνος)** are used for Old Rome and its citizens and (New) Roman/Romaios **(νεο-ρωμαῖος)** or Romeos/Roman **(ρωμηός)** for New Rome and its citizens. Also, Romaic/Roman **(ρωμαϊκός)** and Romaiic **(ρωμαίικος)** are distinguished, respectively, for the West and the East.

Thus, the **Roman "Church"** is more correct than Roman Catholic since Catholic can ONLY mean Orthodox.

3. Western Church: The terms East-West are primarily geographical. However, they acquired historical significance after many centuries and spiritual significance after the Schism of 1054. Eastern is and is called the Orthodox Church, as mentioned above. Western is and is called the Roman Church, which for the Roman-Orthodox Saints (e.g. Photios, Gregory Palamas, Mark of Ephesus, Kolyvades, etc.) is heretic, neo-Arian (mainly due to Filioque). In the spiritual-theological-ecclesiological sense, therefore, we can speak of a Western and an Eastern Church, regardless of geographical coordinates.

4. Latin Church: Around the Second Ecumenical Council (381), the Greek language finally prevailed in the Eastern Roman Empire and the Latin language in the West. In other words, at the time of both the first (867) and the great schism (1054), Western Christianity was identified with the Latin language, while Eastern with Greek. There is, therefore, Latin Christianity before 1054, which is Orthodox, and Latin after the schism, which is not Orthodox. The Latin-speaking Fathers before the Schism, in the entire philological tradition of the East, are Orthodox, while heretics are those after the Schism (Scholastics, for example).

5. Papal Church: In the West, where I also studied, there is constant talk of the Papacy and the Papal Church. And this is beyond any polemical tendency because there is no "Western Church" without a Pope (with the specific content of the term: Primacy, Infallibility, Royalty). Even if some, in the East and in the West, use the adjective "papal" pejoratively, for the Church of Rome, this epithet gives her honour since without a "Pope," she cannot exist!

Western perceptions of the Pope have not changed in the least, as the official (post-Vatican II) "Roman Catholic Catechism," with former Pope Benedict XVI as

editorial director, shows. Why, then, do the "Roman Catholics" consider the designation "Papal Church" an insult, since the medieval doctrines about the "Pope" are taught by them to this day and the Pope/Papacy is the foundation of their faith? Let us not forget that the title "Vicarius Christi" is a derogatory title for Christ Himself, who has no "representatives" (the term is heretical and anti-Christian), but, as we Orthodox accept, He is the Lord and King of the Church as His body "until the end of time." For us, the Patriarchs and all the bishops, together with the entire clergy, are deacons and servants of Christ. That is why there can be no talk in Orthodoxy of "primacy" (and indeed, of authority). So, instead of talking about the terms used, would it not be good to "dynamically return" to the truth of Christ and the Church? As St. Athanasius used to say, "The problem does not lie in words but in things!"

6. As for the name Frank, Frankish, etc., the "Western Church" was shaped by the influence of the Frankish element (Charlemagne, etc.). This is historically certain and needs no further analysis. The Frankish and Teutonic (Deutsch) elements have been present in the Christian West for centuries. The names "Gallic" or "Germanic," Gaul or Germania are ancient. Today, Gaul is called France and Francais. Our westernizing people (18th century) imposed "Gallos (Γάλλος)"-"Gallia (Γαλλία)" so that the meaning of "Frank" would be lost, while our wounds of 1204 have not yet healed. The same applies to Teuton or Deutsch and "German." In the Orthodox-Roman East, the names Frank or Teuton (more rarely) were used and are being used to describe all Westerners and the West. Today, in fact, when Western Europe and "Germany" have once again revealed their true face, we cannot harbour any illusions. Consequently, it is not the names that are to blame, but the mentality, which unfortunately does not change both ecclesiastically and politically…

Two of our ecumenical councils, the Eighth (789) and the Ninth (1351) censured and condemned "Western" errors as heresies and "Western Christianity" as Heresy. If the new "Pan-Orthodox" and, for the Orthodox, "Ecumenical" Council that is being prepared does not recognize these Councils as Ecumenical, it will not be an Orthodox Council, but a robber one, like that of 449, a false Council, like that of Ferrara-Florence (1438/39). If the "Western Church" reconnects with the Orthodox-Catholic Church before the schism and rediscovers the path of its ancient Orthodox Fathers and Saints, then it will be united with the continuity of the Apostolic-Patristic Church and, at the same time, with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which by the grace of God continues it, despite the weaknesses and sins of us Orthodox. Orthodox and Catholics (without quotation marks)

are the saints of the East and the West (the pre-Schism saints of the West) whom we try to follow.

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